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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 001945

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TAGS: MOPS PGOV PREL

SUBJECT: STAFFDEL LAUGHLIN REASSURES GOJ OFFICIALS ON U.S. COMMITMENT TO REALIGNMENT

Classified By: DCM James P. Zumwalt for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: On August 18, MOFA and MOD officials expressed relief upon hearing from visiting staffers of the Senate Appropriations and Armed Services Committees that the Senate's proposed \$211 million budget cut for realignment-related construction in Guam was a "means to elicit transparency" from service branches on the use of funding. The staffdel told the officials that the proposed cut did not suggest changes in Congressional thinking about the importance of realignment and the U.S.-Japan Alliance. In response, the officials asked the staffers to keep in mind that Congressional budgetary decisions would have an impact on Diet debate regarding efforts to advance realignment. The officials also underscored Japan's intention to increase funding for realignment projects in future fiscal years above the \$336 million that the Japanese government transferred to the U.S. Treasury in July. END SUMMARY

¶12. (C) Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) and Senate Appropriations Committee professional staff members Terry Laughlin and Andy Vanlandingham visited Tokyo on August 18 during a tour that included stops in Okinawa and Guam. The purpose of the trip was to gain greater situational awareness of the status of realignment initiatives and to see for themselves the progress made on several critical projects. During their time in Tokyo, they met with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Ministry of Defense (MOD) officials for discussions that focused on the move of approximately 8,000 marine troops to Guam from Okinawa, and on the status of the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF).

"DON'T SEND THE WRONG MESSAGE TO US"

¶13. (C) U.S.-Japan Security Treaty Division Director Takehiro Funakoshi noted the delicate nature of Japan's domestic political scene, as the August 30 elections could produce the first real change in government in Japan's post-war history. He stressed that Congressional actions would influence the attitude and approach of Japan's new leadership. Moreover, if Congress were to attempt to cut funding of realignment projects, this would have a "killer" effect on the future of realignment. He pointed out that Japan has already transferred \$336 million to the U.S. Treasury this year, which was done with the expectation that the U.S. would appropriate a similar sum.

¶14. (C) Funakoshi also remarked that while the GOJ reacted positively to the Obama administration's early reaffirmation of the USG commitment to realignment, there is no such guarantee that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) will be as pragmatic should it come to power after this election. The DPJ has kept its policies intentionally vague in order to

maintain maximum flexibility during the election season, and so their post-election approach to governance is uncertain at best. In this environment, it is critical that Congress be clear in its intentions, said Funakoshi, adding "Don't send the wrong message to us."

¶15. (C) Laughlin explained the that the proposed cuts do not reflect any misgivings about realignment within Congress, but rather were "intended to compel the Navy to become more transparent on the use of funding." Specifically, the members sought a more detailed Guam Master Plan for realignment-related construction. Laughlin expressed regret that Japan may have misinterpreted these actions. Funakoshi termed these comments "reassuring," and he noted that if Congress would continue to send the right message, upcoming events would constrain the DPJ. He mentioned in particular the anticipated signing of a critical landfill agreement by the Okinawa governor as early as next summer, a decision that would leave the DPJ little room to alter course on realignment.

MOD: FUNDING INCREASES OBVIOUS

¶16. (C) In his discussions with the staffdel, MOD Director General for Defense Policy Nobushige Takamizawa called for Congressional help in meeting the 2014 targets for Guam and Okinawa. He highlighted GOJ plans to increase annual funding for realignment projects over the next 5-6 years, cumulatively reaching several billion dollars. Congressional

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actions that might cast doubt on the USG's intention to meet the 2014 target for Guam, however, would slow momentum on the Japanese side regarding Okinawa, Takamizawa emphasized. He added, "Please act so as to allow us to increase our defense budget for realignment projects as planned." Takamizawa also recommended that both sides look for ways to demonstrate realignment progress achieved to date.

¶17. (C) In reply, Laughlin reiterated that the proposed Senate cuts for construction projects no Guam were not meant to be a Congressional statement of opposition to the Guam component of realignment. Rather, the cuts in the Senate mark-up were a "negotiating tool to elicit transparency on the armed services' use of funding." He stressed that the Senate supported the projected transfer of Marines to Guam, and he expressed surprise that the Japanese side had read the proposed cuts otherwise.

¶18. (C) Laughlin cautioned, however, that several members of Congress harbored concerns about the safety aspects of the planned Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) on Okinawa, which Congressional conference negotiations would have to address. Moreover, amendment language to the FY2010 defense spending bill that would raise labor costs for Guam construction would also be a difficult issue for those negotiations. Takamizawa noted that MOD working-level officials were aware of the safety and labor issues, and he expressed hope that both sides would be able to find creative solutions.

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